




Speech By
John Barounis

MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH

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QUEENSLAND PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION BILL

 **Mr BAROUNIS** (Maryborough—LNP) (6.21 pm): In October 2024, Queenslanders voted for change, and that change is here. Queenslanders want action and they want it now. They want transparency in what is going on within the government and they want to know when they will start seeing results. In 2022, the LNP committed to restoring the Queensland Productivity Commission. It was the second bill that was introduced by the Crisafulli government, fulfilling a key promise from our first-100-day plan. Restoring the Productivity Commission is a step towards securing Queensland's future prosperity. By focusing on productivity, we will improve housing affordability, reduce construction costs and ensure the government's capital program is delivered on time and with respect for Queenslanders' money.

Business Chamber Queensland welcomed the re-establishment of the Queensland Productivity Commission stating that 'its re-establishment is central to economic reform in Queensland'. Canegrowers Cairns Region emphasised the importance of evidence-based science, overseen by an independent statutory body, to ensure sustainability in both profitability and environmental stewardship. The Property Council also expressed strong support, highlighting that the legislation provides sufficient powers and structures to robust and independent economic analysis. Former treasurer Curtis Pitt recognised in 2015 that 'governments should seek new productivity gains in order to protect economic growth and living standards' and that the Queensland Productivity Commission is a 'key mechanism' in that process.

In the last 100 days, the Crisafulli government has been listening to the concerns of Queenslanders and I have listened to my electorate. We have addressed critical local issues such as the ongoing traffic hold-ups at Tiaro on the Bruce Highway, particularly during busy holiday periods. We are committed to making the Tiaro bypass a reality and ensuring the missing links on the Bruce Highway are completed. We are working towards making the stretch from Gympie to Maryborough four lanes, ensuring better safety for all Queenslanders. The Bruce Highway is vital to the Maryborough community and our residents are passionate about road safety.

We welcome the government's inquiry into boosting productivity in the building and construction industry which has faced challenges. Housing affordability is a major issue in Maryborough, as it is across Queensland. People need homes and the sooner we can address this, the better. Our community is encouraged by this inquiry and eagerly awaits its outcomes. On a larger scale, the rail project for the 2032 Brisbane Olympics being built at the Torbanlea train manufacturing facility is another source of pride for Maryborough. The Premier's motto of 'building on time and on budget' speaks to our hardworking blue collar town values. We appreciate value for money and we are reassured knowing the Premier is focused on how taxpayers' dollars are spent.

The cost of living in Maryborough remains a concern. With high rents compared to average wages, many in our community are struggling from week to week. While we are fortunate to have the support of charities like the Salvation Army and various church groups, many families still need assistance. The people of Maryborough are relieved to know the Crisafulli government understands the hardships many are facing.

The Crisafulli government is committed to ensuring all Queenslanders feel safe in their communities. I am proud to share that this commitment was put into action in our very own community last December. For some time, we have been facing persistent crime issues in our CBD and the safety of our residents and business owners has been a growing concern. After a town meeting, Queensland Police responded by introducing a dedicated taskforce of officers to focus on patrolling our CBD. This was not a temporary measure—it was a 24-hour service that lasted for almost two months. During this period we saw a dramatic decrease in crime. Shop owners and locals in Maryborough were finally able to operate their business with peace of mind. Both residents and visitors to our heritage city no longer felt unsafe when shopping in the CBD. This showed that not only I care deeply about the safety of our community but also the Crisafulli government is committed to delivering on the promise that everyone has the right to feel safe where they live.

Government red tape remains a significant issue. The new LNP government is committed to tackling these barriers. One of the most distressing concerns I hear from my community is the difficulties some face when seeking housing, especially for those fleeing domestic violence. It is not uncommon for constituents to visit our office desperate for help. This is a serious issue and I am confident the new government will fast-track solutions. The Crisafulli 100-day plan is dedicated to ensuring all Queenslanders have a place to call home. While there is still much work to be done, I am proud of the progress we are making in the social housing space here in Maryborough.

Public health services are another critical concern in our electorate, and we have a long road ahead for us to deliver a satisfactory public health service for our constituents. It is incredibly encouraging that the Crisafulli government has recognised the need for better support when people are at their most vulnerable; however, there is hope on the horizon and it is a time for a fresh start. The Maryborough community has welcomed the new LNP government and we are excited about the transparency and progress the Crisafulli government is bringing to Queensland.

Queensland's economic and industry development depends on improving productivity. A strategic approach to this issue is crucial, and that means finding ways to enhance our skilled and modern workforce. Queenslanders, especially the people of Maryborough, have spoken and I am listening. I am committed to being proactive and responding to their needs, not just as their representative but as a member of our community. On behalf of the Maryborough electorate, I commend the Queensland Productivity Commission Bill 2024 to the House.